The Present of History: the Cansò de la Crozada

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The *Cansò de la Crozada*, or to give it its modern French title, the *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, is an ambiguous text whose nature is double in several ways.[1] Composed by two authors, Guilhem de Tudela and an anonymous continuator, it is at once a 'une chanson de geste historique ou une chronique sous la forme d'épopée', its doubled form reflected in the modes of narration of the two authors.[2] Yves Dossat describes Guilhem de Tudela as writing 'un médiocre occitan, mélangé de formes françaises, le ton est froid', while for his continuator, 'la langue est pure, c'est celle de la région toulousaine', and he writes 'd'une manière véhémente'.[3] Michel Zink ascribes this difference in tone to a development in epic literary style, the *brevitas* of the first author and the colourful descriptions and lengthy *laisses* of the second corresponding to the opposition between 'l'esthétique romane' and 'l'esthétique gothique' that typified earlier and later *chansons de geste*.[4] This aesthetic evaluation places the text more firmly in the realm of the *chanson de geste* than in that of the chronicle, or history, a reading borne out by the form of the text itself. This is composed in *laisses*, in alexandrine verse; and includes the formulaic markers of orality typical of the *chanson de geste* – references to listening and speaking: 'cum avez oït' [as you have heard] (1, 14), 'E si'l voletz entendre' [and if you want to listen to it] (1, 25), appeals to the audience: 'Senhors' [my lords], and narratorial intervention: 'Ben avet tug auzit coment la eretgia/Era tant fort monteia (cui Domni-Dieus maldia!) [Of course you have all heard how this heresy (may God curse it!) became so strong] (2, 4–5). In addition, Guilhem de Tudela explicitly sets his composition in an epic frame: he refers to it as a 'canso' [song], and describes how he has modelled its verse form and melody on those of the *Canso d'Antiocha* (2, 1–3), a *chanson de geste* composed in Occitan in the first half of the twelfth century,

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[1] The only surviving manuscript of this text, Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr., 25425, was composed in or around Toulouse c.1275 and bears no title. The first editor and translator of the text, Paul Meyer, gives it the title *La Chanson de la Croisade contre les Albigeois* (Paris: Renouard, 1875–79). *La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise* is the title given by Eugène Martin-Chabot, who translated the text in 1931, and by Henri Gougaud, whose edition is that used here: *La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1989). References are to laisse numbers followed by line numbers. The English translator of the text gives what is perhaps a more accurate title: *The Song of the Cathar Wars: A History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. by Janet Shirley (Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press, 1996). English translations here are mine, based on Shirley's text.

[2] See Michel Zink's introduction to the edition by Gougaud, p. 11.

[3] Yves Dossat, 'La Croisade vue par les chroniqueurs', in *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIII^e siècle*, ed. by M.-H. Vicaire (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1969), pp. 221–59 (pp. 242–43).

[4] This is in spite of the fact that the two redactions may only have been separated by a few years. Guilhem de Tudela was probably writing 1212–14 (Zink, pp. 18–19), although he claims to have begun his text in 1210 (9, l. 24). The dates for his anonymous continuator are more debatable: Zink argues for a date of 1218–19 (Zink, pp. 21–22), although earlier critics have dated composition around 1228, as the continuator includes a reference to the death of Guy, Simon de Montfort's brother, who was killed 31st January 1228 (142, ll.7–8). Zink sees this as an interpolation.

and of which only a fragment now remains.[5] The continuator (for brevity I will henceforth refer to him as Anon) keeps this epic form, but lengthens the *laisses* (from an average of 21 lines per *laisse* to an average of 81) and changes the metrical device that links the *laisses* together, moving from a *coblas capcaudadas* (the short line that closes the *laisse* rhymes not with those preceding, but with those of the following *laisse*), to a *coblas capfinidas* form (the short line does not rhyme with any other, but is repeated as the first hemistich of the following *laisse*).

The formal shape of the poem and the intention of the poets (as far as genre is concerned) would seem to be generally at one. In its content, however, the *canso* shifts away from the time-frame of a typical epic narrative, towards the historical and the real; events are not set in a distant, legendary past, but recounted as they unfold. It presents an account of actions and debates that were either witnessed directly by the authors, or told to them by those who were present, an immediacy that appears particularly vivid in the case of Guilhem de Tudela, who states: 'Pos que fo comensatz, entro que fo fenit,/No mes en als sa entensa neish a penas dormit' [From when it [the *chanson*] was begun, until it was ended, he was completely absorbed in it, so much so that he hardly slept] (1, 22–23).[6] The author appears caught up in the action of writing, as well as that of ongoing events, burning the candle at both ends. Even Anon, whose narrative picks up the story in 1213, where Guilhem leaves it, probably only began his writing a few years later, in 1218, so does not rely on dim and distant memory to shape his account, and the events he describes are as factual and historically accurate as those described in contemporary chronicles, if not more so.[7]

As seen from the brief overview given above, the *Cansò de la Crozada* does not conform straightforwardly to a *chanson de geste* model: the text presents a history in the form of a song, and a genre generally viewed as a northern French form is remoulded by Occitan language and content.[8] This slippage has a further significance at the level of the *canso*'s cultural context: its authors are composers of the same physical text -- there is no break in the narrative, and the second author does not declare his presence – yet this apparent narrative continuity and homogeneity is deceptive, for the two writers are ideologically and politically opposed. Guilhem supports the French crusading force, while Anon is passionately on the side of Occitania and its people, though even here there are ambiguities, as discussed below. My aim in this essay is not to attempt to pry these oppositions apart, or to delimit the *Cansò* by ascribing it to one genre or another, to the chronicle or the *chanson de geste*, to history or fiction. This would be an impossible task, and one that would diminish the scope and vibrancy of this lengthy poem. Nonetheless, the framework provided by genre, and by the notion of 'history', does provide an interesting

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[5] For a useful comparison between the two texts see Carol Dewberry, 'La *Canso d'Antiocha*: histoire et légende. Perspectives sur la bataille d'Antioche', in *La Croisade: réalités et fictions. Actes du Colloque d'Amiens 18–22 mars 1987*, ed. by Danielle Büschinger (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1989), pp. 97–109.

[6] This use of the third person for the 'witness function' is usually found in earlier chronicles and contrasts with the use of the 'I-narrator' (or first person form) in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chronicles.

[7] Several critics comment on the historical accuracy of the *Cansò de la Crozada*, the reported events of which may be compared with those that appear in the contemporary Latin chronicles of Pierre des Vaux-de-Cernay, and Guillaume de Puylaurens.

[8] The *chanson de geste* itself is a genre that pulls together different elements, imbued as it is with history, legend and myth, and it reflects contemporary social concerns and ideologies as well as the desire to entertain. Fiction is nonetheless the predominant element of these epic tales. On the *chanson de geste* as an Occitan, as well as a Northern French form, see Rita Lejeune, 'L'Esprit de croisade dans l'épopée occitane', in *Paix de Dieu*, pp. 143–73.

way into the text, and a means of examining the polyvalent nature of the *Cansò de la Crozada* from the point of view of what the text *does*, rather than what it *is*.

In *The Content of the Form*, Hayden White considers the relationship between narrative discourse and the writing of history: '[h]istoriography is an especially good ground on which to consider the nature of narration and narrativity because it is here that our desire for the imaginary, the possible, must contest with the imperatives of the real, the actual'.[9] White points to three basic kinds of historical representation: 'the annals, the chronicle, and the history proper – the imperfect "historicality" of two of which is evidenced in their failure to attain full narrativity of the events of which they treat' (White, p. 4). White thus equates the writing of a 'perfect' history with the writing of narrative; a history orders events in a chronological framework, and narrates them in a way that reveals an order of meaning, rather than a simple sequence of events. He quotes Peter Gay: 'Historical narration without analysis is trivial, historical analysis without narration is incomplete'.[10] According to White, the chronicle is an imperfect form of history as it aspires to narrativity, but never achieves it, one of the principal markers of this failure being its lack of closure. The chronicle 'does not so much conclude as simply terminate' (White, p. 5), as the discourse of the text ceases in the present of its author.

According to Hayden White's analysis, the *Cansò de la Crozada* slides between different modes of discourse: it presents a narrative, in which a narrator participates; it juxtaposes the imaginary with the real (in terms of invented direct discourse in scenes of council etc.); and it gives a meaning to events, yet its form is not that of a clear-cut story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Indeed, the ending of both Guilhem's section of the *Cansò* and that of his continuator could be seen as corresponding to White's definition of a 'failed history', as they both terminate in what is presumed to have been the present of writing. They give no narrative closure, as the writing of text and the chronological unfolding of events have caught up with one another. Yet White also points to the necessity of a historical narrative to have a moral ending and a moral meaning: he asks, '[h]as any historical narrative ever been written that was not informed not only by moral awareness, but specifically by the moral authority of the narrator?' (White, p. 21). This sense of moral meaning is seamed throughout the narrative of the *Cansò de la Crozada*, and the text can be seen to have a moral, if not a narrative, closure. As mentioned above, the two authors construct their tales from different perspectives. Guilhem de Tudela was originally from Navarre (which may explain his imperfect Occitan), but he moved to Montauban and entered the service of Baudouin, brother of Raymond VI, comte de Toulouse. Baudouin changed sides to support the crusading French army (c.1211–12), and the whole of Guilhem's narrative is composed from this point of view. Guilhem opens his song with an appeal to God: 'El nom del Payre e del Filh e del Sant Esperit' [In the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost] (1, 1). Thus from the very start he marks his work as belonging firmly in the realm of Catholicism. Catharism is 'la fola crezensa' [the false belief] (1, 9), and those who hold to it 'No prezan lo prezic una poma porria' [value sermons as much as a rotten apple] (2, 25). Yet Guilhem's discourse is not entirely polemical in tone, and he reveals himself as anti-Cathar, rather than anti-Meridional. He

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[9] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 4. White differentiates between narrative and narrativity as follows: 'a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on to the world and reports it [narrative] and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story [narrativity]', (p. 2). The first has an 'ego', either explicit or implicit, that maintains the discourse, while the second lacks any reference to a narrator (p. 3).

[10] Peter Gay, *Style in History* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 189. Quoted by White, p. 5.

recognises the noble qualities of the southern lords in particular, saying of the young comte de Béziers, Raymond Roger Trencavel: 'En tant cant lo mons dura n'a cavalier milhor,/Ni plus pros ni plus larg, plus cortes ni gensor' [And in all the world there is no finer knight, nor a more valiant, more generous, more courteous nor more gently-bred] (laisse 15, 3–4). Trencavel is placed on the side of the 'right' through his Catholicism and his nobility; it is his vassals that harbour heretics, and it is Trencavel's 'error' in not wiping them out that leads to his death, rather than his own sin.

In addition to praising the southern nobility, Guilhem de Tudela implies faults on the side of the Catholic French, although he does not criticise their policy directly, instead using his position as narrator to comment obliquely. Guilhem was a member of the Catholic clergy, canon of Saint-Antonin-en-Rouergue after the town was taken by Simon de Montfort in 1212, but this ostensible grounding firmly on the side of the crusaders did not prevent him from revealing a critical ability and a humanity in his writing: 'à preuve, ses blâmes énergiques contre les excès particulièrement révoltants des croisés' (Lejeune, p. 157).[11] Guilhem's description of the impetus behind the crusade does little to inspire confidence in its moral directive. He reports the scene in which the pope and his legates make the decision to call for a crusade against the Midi:

> Lai fo lo cosselhs pres per que's moc la fiela,
> Dont motz homes so mortz fendutz per la büela
> Et manta rica dona, mota bela piuzela...
> Que anc no lor remas ni mantels ni gonela. (5, 10–13)

> [There it was that the decision was made that led to so much sorrow, that left so many men dead with their guts spilled out and so many great ladies and lovely girls with neither gown nor cloak].

The narratorial voice gives insight into the disaster yet to come, but Guilhem writes from the perspective of one who already knows, and who judges. (He is describing the events of 1208 from the standpoint of c.1212). He does not simply recount events reported to him by those in positions of authority who were present – 'Aisi com'o retrais maestre Pons de Mela,/Que l'avia trames lo reis qui te Tudela,/Senher de Pampalona, del castel de la Estela' [this was told to me by Master Pons de Mela, envoy of the king [of Navarre] that holds Tudela, lord of Pamplona and Estella] (5,17–19) – he also imbues his account with a moral message.

In his account of the sacking and destruction of Béziers, Guilhem initially seems to place responsibility for the attack directly on the shoulders of 'Le barnatges de Fransa e sels de vas Paris,/E li clerc e li laic, li princeps e'ls marchis' [the lords from France and Paris, the clergy, the laymen, the princes, the marquises] (21, 2–3), who had ordered that any garrison that refused to surrender to the crusading forces should be destroyed and its inhabitants massacred. In the case of Béziers, this destruction is acted out, however, not by knights and soldiers, but by the 'arlotz' – the valets or servants, who run riot and pillage the city. This could be read as a means of displacing blame for the severity of the attack away from the clergy and leaders of the crusade, but the conquering of the city certainly did occur in this way; in his history of the crusade, Jonathan Sumption recounts how '[s]eizing clubs and tent-poles they furiously rushed the city, and attempted to dig into the base of the

[11] On a different note, Dossat sees Guilhem's ambiguous stance as in itself a political choice: 'il vaut mieux se placer au centre, afin que, si on voit quelqu'un se noyer, on puisse aussitôt retourner en arrière', and perhaps a financial one: '[l]e troubadour devait d'ailleurs donner des gages un peu à tout le monde, il ne faillait pas méconter son auditoire' (Dossat, pp. 246–47).

powerful walls. Others threw themselves against the gates and began to smash the wooden beams'.[12] Yet Guilhem is again not content to report the scene objectively, albeit his observations are accurate. He views the camp servants as culpable, calling them 'li gartz tafur pudnais' [filthy stinking wretches] (22, 3), and comparing their burning of Béziers with Raoul de Cambrai's burning of a town in the epic poem of that name (Raoul being a rebel baron, whose reprehensible actions lead to general death and destruction).[13]

Guilhem's account of the destruction of Béziers is brief (four short *laisses*) and lacks any detailed description, but he refers three times to the sheltering of the townspeople in the church (19, 9; 20, 7; 21, 15) – this repetition in successive *laisses* can be seen as a typical *chanson de geste* trait, but nonetheless it marks the link between church and people as significant in Guilhem's eyes. His account may lack the descriptive elements that mark his continuator's narrative, but Guilhem's account is still emotive:

> Per so son a Bezers destruit e a mal mis
> Que trastotz los aucisdron : no lor podo far pis.
> E totz sels aucizian qu'el mostier se son mis,
> Que no'ls pot grandir crotz, autar ni cruzifis;
> E los clercs aucizian li fols ribautz mendics
> E femnas e efans, c'anc no cug us n'ichis.
> Dieus recepia las armas, si'l platz, en paradis!
> C'anc mais tan fera mort del temps Sarrazinis
> No cuge que fos faita ni c'om la cossentis. (21, 12–20)

> [That is why they massacred them at Béziers, killing them all. It was the worst that could be done to them. And they killed all who fled into the church: no cross, or altar, or crucifix could save them. And these mad beggarly servants killed the clergy, and the women and children – I believe no-one came out alive. May God in His mercy receive their souls in Paradise! For never since the time of the Saracens has such a slaughter, I believe, been carried out or consented to.]

By his linking of the massacre with the crusades against the pagan Saracens, the perceived enemies of God, Guilhem marks this conflict as a religious one, but his emphasis on church and crucifix and his criticism of the 'fols ribautz mendics' align the people of Béziers, rather than the crusaders, on the side of the righteous. There is a moral meaning in Guilhem's text, but his treatment of the morality of the crusade is not unambiguous, and in this it may reflect the popular opinions of the time, certainly in the south.[14]

There is less moral complexity in the continuation of the *Chanson*, as Anon shifts the focus of his narrative away from the war as a holy crusade, in order to concentrate on the destruction brought to the Midi by the crusaders. From the very start of Anon's intervention in the tale, the tone is decidedly anti-French. He gives the words of Pierre d'Aragon, as he announces his intention to join forces with Raymond VI, his brother-in-law: 'E lo coms de Tolosa a lor merce clamea/Que no sia sa terra arsa ni malnenea,/Que no

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[12] Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p. 92.

[13] See *Raoul de Cambrai*, ed. by Sarah Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). For an analysis of the themes of loss and destruction in the poem see my article 'Loss, Refiguration and Death in *Raoul de Cambrai*', *French Studies*, 57 (2003), 297–310.

[14] In his study of the reaction to 'la guerre-sainte' in meridional literature at the time of the Albigensian crusade, Étienne Delaruelle points to 'la complexité des phénomènes d'opinion publique à cette époque' and 'la complexité de l'idée même de la croisade'. See Étienne Delaruelle, 'La Critique de la guerre-sainte dans la littérature méridionale', in *Paix de Dieu*, pp. 128–39, (p. 137).

a tort ni colpa neguna gent nea.' [And the count of Toulouse [Raymond] had appealed for their help to prevent his land from being burned and laid waste, for he had done no harm to any living soul] (131, 12–14). There is no acknowledgement at this point of the religious nature of the war: 'Li clergue e·ls Frances volon dezeretar/Lo comte mon cunhat e de terra gitar' [The clergy and the French want to disinherit the count, my brother-in-law, and throw him off his land] (132, 1–2). This moral stance, with the French and their allies seen as wrongful invaders, and the Méridionaux as defenders of their rights, is continued throughout the second part of the *Chanson*. The conflict is presented as political, with Christians on both sides, and the Cathar heresy an excuse for the French conquest of the Midi.

In this conflict, God is used as a moral marker. For Guilhem de Tudela, God is on the side of the crusading force: when the mangonels belonging to the French army are attacked and set alight, 'Be viatz foran ars, si fes un pauc de vent,/Mas Dieus non o volia.' [They would certainly have burned at once, if there had been a breath of wind, but God did not want this] (54, 28–29). Likewise, when the city of Termes falls, and castles are abandoned, Guilhem interprets this as God's miracle (58, 6), and when Cabaret falls Guilhem rejoices: 'Mas contra la ost de Crist no a castels dureia/Ni ciutat qu'ilh trobon, tan non es enserria.' [But against the host of Christ no castle or citadel can stand, however strong its battlements] (66, 15–16). For his continuator, the opposite is true: God hurries to help young Raymond VII (163, 6), and at the prolonged and failing siege of Beaucaire the words Anon places in the mouths of Simon de Montfort, leader of the crusade, and his supporters shore up the notion of the wrongful nature of their crusade from the inside: '"Senhors", so ditz lo coms, "semblansas e parvens/Me fai Dieus e·m demostra que soi ichitz de mens"' ['My lords', said the count, 'God has shown to me by these signs that I am out of my mind'] (170, 8–9). The crusade's lack of validity, led by a madman and bent on the acquisition of wealth, is confirmed by Gui de Lévis, one of Simon's principal advisors:

> "Bels fraire", ditz en Guis, "eu vos dic veramens
> Que Dieus no vol suffrir que vos siatz tenens
> Del castel de Belcaire ni de l'als longamens;
> Qu'el garda e cossira vostres captenemens:
> Ab sol que sia vostre tot l'avers e l'argens,
> Vos sol non avetz cura de la mort de las gens" (170, 16–22)

> ["Dear brother", said Gui, "I tell you in all truth that God does not want you to hold the castle of Beaucaire and the rest any longer, for He is watching and weighing up your actions. As long as you can have your fill of land and wealth, you do not care about the death of the people"]

The motivation for the crusade is seen as one of earthly, rather than heavenly, gain, and the very fact that Gui calls Simon 'Bels fraire', and he speaks 'veramens' gives strength to his words, undercutting the position of the French as righteous crusaders. Anon's text closes as the French army and their reinforcements, led now by Louis, son of Philippe Auguste, march once more on Toulouse, yet as well as trepidation, there is also a strong sense of hope:

> Mas la Verges Maria lor en sira guirens,
> Que segon la dreitura repren los falhimens,
> Per que la sanc benigna no·s sia espandens.
> Car sent Cernis los guida, que non sian temens,
> Que Dieus e dreitz e forsa e·l coms joves e sens

Lor defendra Tholoza!

Amen (214, 131–36)

> [But the Virgin Mary will save them from this, she who puts right all that is wrong, so that innocent blood will not be shed. They will not be afraid, for Saint Sernin leads them, and God, justice and strength and the wise young count will defend Toulouse for them!]

This presents us with an ending which is distinctly moral in tone, and which does provide a kind of conclusion to the text, albeit not one that resolves conflict, or closes down any future narrativity. The gaze of the omniscient narrator projects from a precarious present into a future which seems much more certain, founded as it is on the moral authority of the narrator, but also on that of God, the saints, and the young count Raymond of Toulouse, who is numbered in their company. The perspective of his gaze contrasts with that of Guilhem de Tudela, as Guilhem retrospectively comments on the Pope's decision to launch the crusade (quoted above). While Guilhem's moral commentary marks a shift from relative stability to death and destruction, from lived past to authorial present, Anon marks the reverse, and an accession to a state of future bliss akin to heavenly transcendence.

It is evident that Hayden White's definition of a historical narrative as one with a moral meaning and moral ending may be applied to the *Cansò de la Crozada*, but a moral tone is also significant to the epic context of the *Cansò*, especially in the continuation. The words Anon gives to the 'wise lawyer' who speaks at Raymond VI's council recall the famous lines from the Oxford *Chanson de Roland*: 'Que nos avem gran dreit ed els an los pecatz' [As we are in the right and they are in the wrong] (133, 15). Compare Roland's 'Paien unt tort e chrestïens unt dreit' [The pagans are in the wrong, and the Christians in the right] (79, 1015).[15] The echoing of Roland's polemical opposition of religious forces imbues the political struggle of the *Cansò de la Crozada* with a deeper moral message – one that culminates in the closing lines of the text and the certainty of divine support for the people of the Midi. Likewise, the play on light and darkness, springtime and winter, that occurs throughout both parts of the *Cansò* can be read metaphorically: the French are 'una gent estranha, que fa'l lum escantir' [a foreign people, who quench the light] (196, 21), and Raymond VII – reminiscent of Christ – is 'lo valens coms joves, que'l mon fa reverdir/E colora e daura so que's sol escurzir' [the brave young count, who brings back the green of springtime to the world, and the brightness of gold to the dark days] (208, 101–102).

The echoing of well-known *chansons de geste* repeats throughout the song: Olivier is a symbol of bravery for Raymond's southern army (183, 7), but the story of Roland and Olivier is also used negatively, to criticise the pride of Simon de Montfort: 'E per l'orgolh de Fransa e pels faitz menudiers/Foron mort en Espanha Rotlans e Oliviers' [And it was because of French pride and pettiness that Roland and Olivier died in Spain] (192, 74–75). Guillaume d'Orange's name is used to shore up the courage of de Montfort's troops, trapped in the keep at Beaucaire; a French knight speaks: 'Senhors, remembre vos Guilhelmet al cort nes,/Co al seti d'Aurenca suffri tans desturbiers' [My lords, remember Guillaume Short Nose, and all he endured at the siege of Orange] (159, 49–50). These *chanson de geste* heroes are well-known figures, referenced allegorically, as symbols of courage or pride, or as noble suffering. In all instances, the emphasis is on remembrance, both within the narrative, and in the mind of the extra-diegetic audience. Rita Lejeune speaks of the 'grands héros épiques dont le souvenir a hanté les provinces occitanes: Roland, Olivier, Guillaume au siège d'Orange' (Lejeune, p. 159), of which Guillaume

[15] See *La Chanson de Roland*, ed. by Ian Short (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1990).

d'Orange is 'le héros le plus typique des provinces occitanes' (Lejeune, p. 162); indeed, she sees Guillaume as '*leur* héros' (Lejeune, p. 163). Yet in the *Cansò de la Crozada* these epic heroes are not presented as either specifically French or Occitan, rather they form an intrinsic component of literary culture, and the audience's knowledge of this culture is presumed by both authors of the *Cansò*.

The history transmitted by the *Cansò de la Crozada* is one which is bound up with themes that also predominate in the *chanson de geste*. Chivalry, nobility, land and its inheritance are all important, although they each carry a different weight in the two parts of the *chanson*. Guilhem de Tudela is more concerned in general with chivalric prowess and nobility than is Anon. He praises both French and southern lords, and Eleanor, sister of Pierre d'Aragon and wife of Raymond VI of Toulouse, is 'La plus bona reïna, tota la belazor/Que sia en crestias ni en la paianor' [the best and most beautiful queen in all of Christianity, or in pagan lands] (15, 19–20). His most frequent praise is reserved for Guilhem de Contres, who fights valiantly, and for whom God does many miracles (30, 1–2). Zink points out the shift away from historical accuracy here: 'Le poète accorde à Guillaume de Contres une place démesurée par rapport à son rôle historique réel [...] Il est probable que Guillaume de Contres est le destinaire du poème: d'où l'éloge final' (Zink, p. 19). The last few *laisses* of Guilhem de Tudela's poem focus in particular on Guilhem de Contres' bravery and prowess, turning him into a veritable epic hero.

For Anon, concerns are quite different. He supports the side he sees as being that of legitimacy and righteousness, and his emphasis lies not only on *chevaliers* as skilled fighters, but more significantly on the intrinsic link between meridional nobility and the land. As seen above, the first *laisse* of the continuation places emphasis on Raymond VI's rightful possession of his land, and the desire of the crusaders to disinherit him (131).[16] Anon later recounts Raymond VI's embassy to Rome, where he and his son kneel before the Pope 'Per recobrar las terras que foron dels pairos' [in order to recover the lands of their forefathers] (143, 19). These are given into the governance of Simon de Montfort (143, 32–36), 'Don li comte remazo ab coratges felos,/Car cel qui pert sa terra mot n'a·l cor engoichas' [The count was very angry at this, for a man who loses his land suffers deeply] (143, 37–38). The link between blood, land and inheritance is consistently affirmed throughout Anon's text, to the extent that land and people seem to exist in a symbiotic relationship. As Raymond VI returns to reconquer Toulouse his dispossessed men weep:

> Cascus ditz e·l coratge: "Virge emperairitz,
> Redetz me lo repaire on ai estat noiritz!
> Mais val que laïns viva o i sia sebelhitz
> No que mais an pel mon perilhatz ni aunitz." (182, 58–61)

> [Each said in his heart, 'Virgin, Empress, give me back the home of my childhood! Better I should live or be buried here than wander the world in danger and disgrace']

The crusaders attack the land as a source of nourishment, burning fields and crops and destroying storehouses (e.g. 84, 15–17); as if in retaliation, the land itself is later nourished by their split blood:

> E e·l camp de Montoliu ed plantatz us jardis,
> Que tot jorn nais e brolha, e es plantatz de lis,

[16] *Laisse* 131 forms a transition between the work of the two poets and was reworked by Anon before he added his own text.

> Mas lo blanc e.l vermelh, qu'i grana es floris,
> Es carn e sanc e glazes e cervelas gequis. (194, 76–79)
>
> [In the field of Montoulieu there grew a garden that flourished anew and blossomed every day, planted with lilies, but the red and white that flowered among the green were flesh and blood, swords and scattered brains].

The land is renewed through the death of the French, and the link between nature, the land of the Midi and its people is reinforced through the depiction of Raymond VII, the young comte de Toulouse, who represents an optimistic future: on his arrival in Toulouse he is admired 'coma flor de rozer' [like a flowering rose] (201, 61), while the city of Toulouse itself is earlier described as 'flors e roza' [the flower and the rose] (79, 7). This imagery links together the city and its lord, as well as the two sections of the *canso*, spanning their ideological divide. This connection is emblematic of the *Cansò de la Crozada* as a whole, which engages with the poetic, the epic and the historical, and with past, present and future.

Commemoration is an important aspect of the *Cansò de la Crozada*, and the text's engagement with genre and with the span of time are both significant in creating a work that memorialises as well as entertains. Despite the sense of immediacy produced by the markers of orality in the text – the narrator's appeals to his audience, as seen above – epic heroes and epic heritage are memorialised in writing in the *Cansò*. Guilhem de Tudela specifically states in his prologue that he composed this book and set it in writing: 'Adonc fit el cest libre es el meteish l'escrit' (1, 21), and while the inauguration of the crusade provokes him to song, this is a new song set down on parchment: 'Qu'eu ne cug encar far bona canson novela/Tot en bel pargamin' (5, 23–24). Composition and writing are viewed as simultaneous and co-dependent. Gabrielle Spiegel sees medieval literary practice in general as commemorative:

> [T]he fundamental goal of oral recitation is, precisely, to revivify the past and make it live in the present, to fuse past and present, singer and hearer, author and public, into a single collective entity. [...] The written literary text, when it represents a transcription of a once-live recitation, commemorates both the past which is sung about and the performance itself'.[17]

She also sees early vernacular histories as sharing the underlying narrative pattern of the epic – repetitive and sequential (Spiegel, p. 186) – and this can be seen in the *Cansò de la Crozada*, linking it with both the orally delivered epic and early histories written in the vernacular. But the significant difference in the case of the *Cansò* is that the text does not conform to Bakhtin's (and Spiegel's) conception of the epic as a genre whose 'formally constitutive feature is the transferral of a represented world into the past' (quoted in Spiegel, p. xiv). The authors of the *Cansò* do not seek to recuperate a lost past, or to mediate the present through a reinventing or reworking of the past. The world represented in the *Cansò* is, as already seen, that of the author's present, at least for the major part of each of their accounts. In place of creating, or recreating a past, through the discursive layers of invention, memory, and the forgetting of events,[18] the two authors of the *Cansò*

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[17] Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997), p. 184.

[18] See Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). He sees historiography as 'a selection between what can be *understood* and what must be *forgotten* in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility', (p. 4).

seek to create an image of the present which will itself memorialise a particular view of history. According to Michel de Certeau, writing 'possesses a symbolizing function; it allows a society to situate itself by giving itself a past through language, and it thus opens to the present a space of its own' (de Certeau, p. 100). The *Cansò* looks forward to a future past, to becoming the past, and in so doing, it creates a discursive space that combines past, present and future. The problem here is that the present history which the text creates is doubled, and despite the easy transition between narratorial voices and perspectives, these are in competition with one another, and Guilhem's pro-French discourse haunts the second part of the text, with its pro-Occitania stance. Hayden White states: '[t]he authority of the historical narrative is the authority of reality itself' (White, p. 20), but here we see a doubling of reality that points to the impossibility of transmitting an absolute 'truth' of history.